

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

REF: LONDON 11576

1. SUMMARY. SHOOTING AND BOMBING ATTACKS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE CONTINUED AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. SOLIDERS AND POLICEMEN ARE THE MAIN TARGETS. THE ARMY GARRISON WAS REENFORCED AS WE ENTER THE MOST CRITICAL MARCHING WEEK OF THE YEAR. PROVISIONAL IRA PRISONERS PROTESTING FOR POLITICAL STATUS ARE TAKING THEIR CASES TO STRASBOURG, AND THE PROVISIONALS DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES FROM ARCHBISHOP O'FIAICH. END SUMMARY.

2. INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE: THE PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN'S "REPUBLICAN NEWS" AUGUST 5 PRINTED AN INTERVIEW WITH A SENIOR LEADER AUTHORIZED BY THE ARMY COUNCIL TO SPEAK FOR PIRA (MOST OF THE INTERVIEW HAD EARLIER APPEARED IN A DUBLIN MAGAZINE). THE SPOKESMAN SAID "WE ARE NOW DETERMINED TO DIRECT OUR ATTENTION AND ENERGIES EXCLUSIVELY AGAINST THE BRITISH," AND INDEED MOST INCIDENTS SINCE THE LAST REPORT JULY 19 (REFTEL) WERE AGAINST SECURITY FORCES.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BELFAS 00147 081226Z

3. WE NOTE SIX SHOOTING AND EIGHT BOMBING INCIDENTS. MOST WERE IN BELFAST. ONE SOLDIER WAS KILLED BY A BOMB, AND A CATHOLIC POSTMAN WAS DELIBERATELY SHOT TO DEATH FOR UNKNOWN MOTIVES, PERHAPS BY MISTAKE. TWO SOLDIERS AND THREE POLICEMEN WERE HURT, PLUS FOUR CIVILIAN BYSTANDERS. BLAST INCENDIARIES WERE USED IN TWO ATTACKS LAST WEEKEND IN DOWNTOWN BELFAST OUTSIDE

THE SECURITY BARRIER, AND THREE PROXY BOMBS WERE USED AGAINST TWO POLICE STATIONS. IN ONE OPERATION THE ARMY DEFUSED THREE BOMBS CONTAINING A TOTAL OF 300 POUNDS OF HOMEMADE EXPLOSIVES. THE USE OF PROXY BOMBS (THE DRIVER OF A HIJACKED VEHICLE FORCED TO DRIVE TO THE TARGET) AND SUCH LARGE AMOUNTS OF EXPLOSIVES IS UNUSUAL THESE DAYS.

4. REENFORCEMENTS: A BATTALION WAS FLOWN IN LAST WEEKEND TO REENFORCE THE 13-BATTALION GARRISON DURING THIS TRADITIONALLY HIGH TENSION MARCHING WEEK: THE REPUBLICANS AUGUST 9 COMMEMORATION OF INTERNMENT SEVEN YEARS AGO, AND THE LOYALISTS' APPRENTICE BOYS PARADE IN LONDONDERRY AUGUST 12. THE PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN CHARGES THAT THE ARMY IS NOW ARRESTING MEN IN ORDER TO COMPLICATE PLANNING FOR THE COMMEMORATION DEMONSTRATIONS.

5. PRISONERS ON THE BLANKET: FOUR REPUBLICAN PRISONERS PROTESTING FOR POLITICAL STATUS REPORTEDLY HAVE HAD THEIR SOLICITORS TAKE THEIR CASES TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN STRASBOURG. THEY ARE EXPECTED TO CLAIM VIOLATIONS OF NINE ARTICLES OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE MAIN CHARGE APPARENTLY WILL BE INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT.

6. REPUBLICANS ARE EXPLOITING LAST WEEK'S STATEMENT BY THE CATHOLIC PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND -- ON THE CONDITION OF PRISONERS ON THE BLANKET (BELFAST 142 AND 145) -- IN THEIR PREPARATIONS FOR THE INTERERNMENT-DAY COMMEMORATION. BUT THE PROVISIONALS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BELFAS 00147 081226Z

-- THROUGH THE "REPUBLICAN NEWS" -- MADE CLEAR THAT THEIR AIMS DIFFER FROM THE ARCHBISHOP'S. THE WEEKLY WELCOMES THE ARCHBISHOP'S STATEMENT BUT CONSIDERS IT INSUFFICIENT. THE PROVISIONALS' CONCERN IS NOT HUMANITARIAN BUT POLITICAL, AND THEY REJECT MERE CONCESSIONS ON SPECIFIC POINTS OF PRISONER TREATMENT IN FAVOR OF POLITICAL STATUS AS SUCH, AND ALL IT ENTAILS. STOUT

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